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Perspectives for designing a new healthcare environment; what person-environment factors do future users think are important?

Wellbeing Centre = A centre for wider life-style related issues

This new centre intends to:

- offer psychological support
- support behaviour change
- provide basic health checks
- signpost to other services
- provide individual consultations
- offer computer self assessments



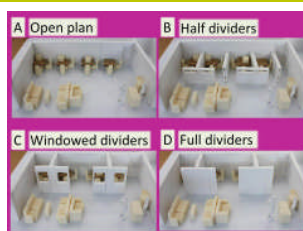
Research Questions

- 1) What environmental features do end users consider important for a positive experience of a healthcare environment *before* it is built?
- 2) How comparable is this to existing experimental research?

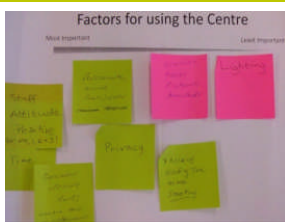
Method

53 Royal Free
Trust members

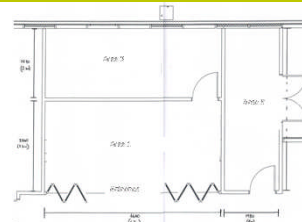
3 focus groups,
3 tasks:



1) Multiple choice questions



2) Defining important design features and attributes



3) Designing the layout in 2 dimensional (left) and 3 dimensional moveable models (right)



Results

Six themes emerged from triangulated data (blue boxes). Mixed evidence of identified environmental features as important in people's experiences of healthcare (green boxes). End users considered service more important.

Atmosphere

- + Homely/Modern atmosphere
- + Informal and comfortable
- + Natural elements present
- + Maximise natural lighting

Homely Modern

= Mixed for relaxing or stressful experience
- Unclear purpose

Nature

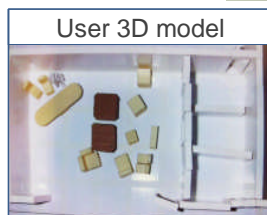
- + More relaxed, less stressed
- + Calm and content
- + Shorter hospital stay
- + Less pain killers

Natural Light

- + Less stressed
- + Perceived less draining
- + Less pain medications
- + Shorter stays

Initial points of contact

- + Visible reception, close to entrance
- + Visible, clear queuing system
- + Easy access for all
- Avoid "intimidating" desks



Reception

- + Immediately recognisable
- + Clear view of entrance
- + Waiting times communicated perhaps electronically

Access

- + Wide doors and pathways
- + Open long desk with lowered sections

Waiting experience

- + Comfortable and relaxing
- + Provide choice (furniture, waiting areas)
- + Display waiting times
- + Display appropriate health information in uncluttered way
- Avoid unrelated distractions

User drawing



Attractive

= mixed for anxiety & stress reduction
+ increased attention

Choice

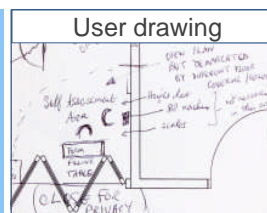
- + reduce stress
- + sense of control
- + no frustration & dissatisfaction

Informative

- + perceived to help self-management
- + TV has negative impact on waiting experience

Health assessment areas

- + Provide places with varied privacy levels
- + Consider auditory and visual privacy e.g. position of computers, sound proofing
- + Use self-assessment areas to "help get people in", as long as privacy still offered
- + Non confrontational seating



Privacy

- + auditory and visual privacy breaches depend on floor plan
- + granular privacy

Spatial layout, size, structure

+ Depends on clear service process

Allow flexibility as service develops over time

Service + More important than environment Determine, to large extent, before engaging users in environment design process

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